

STOPGAP

Australian Science Fiction
Newsletter

(May-June, 1952)

-- G.B.Stone
Box 182,
Broadway P.O.
Sydney, NSW

Lyell Crane In Sydney:

Lyell Crane, Australian-born co-founder of Science Fiction International, left his base of operation, Toronto, early last year, and has since been once around the world -- North of the Equator -- and back again to Australia. He attended the First International S.F. Convention in London last May, then spent a few more months in Britain, getting around to visit fan groups all over the place, including W.A. Willis and the Belfast bunch. Then he saw a fair amount of NATO Europe, with Paris as headquarters but calling on Capt. Ken Slater in NW Germany. Then on back to Canada via the Mediterranean route to Pakistan and India, Singapore and points East and West. Then over the Pacific to Sydney. "I wanted to see sunlight again" he explains. Lyell is the first fan with direct experience of fandom in more advanced countries we've ever had the chance to meet in the flesh. We're learning a lot about what goes on in the U.S. in particular. Lyell finds we compare pretty well with the run of fan groups for numbers and organisation, taking account of isolation. But he advises, "Go all out for an overseas publicity drive -- they

just haven't heard about Australian fans over there."

You'll probably hear plenty more from Lyell by next Stopgap.

STF ON SALE IN SYDNEY:

We haven't nearly kept up with things lately, but plenty of stf has appeared. British pocket books available include new Cherry Tree editions of "Ralph 124c41 plus" by Hugo Gernsback, a classic work by Science Fiction's First Citizen; "Gabriel over the White House" by Col. T.F. Tweed, known perhaps by its other title, "Rinehard"; and "The Last Space Ship" by Murray Leinster, which is the three Disciplinary Circuit stories.

BOOKS:

You can still buy Clarke's factual "Exploration of Space" and fictional "Sands of Mars". Bonestell and Ley's "Conquest of Space" apparently not. Various works on rocketry in general. "The Other Half of the Planet" by one Paul Capon, sequel to "The Other Side of the Sun", strictly for the younger generation, though not being advertised as such. Same goes for Heuer's non-fiction "Men of Other Planets". If you care for flying saucers you can get Scully, Heard and Kehoe, with a bit of scratching. Bradbury's "Silver Locusts" is still on sale in the popular novels class, with Wyndham's "Day of the Triffids" -- the Keyes-Douglas region: for some reason the section of the public that supports novels a little more profound than the real best sellers is buying good science fiction slanted a little their way. Be that as it may, these are good -- the first is the British version of "The Martain Chronicles", a

group of stories about Mars vaguely strung together. The second a Man-versus-walking-plant tale.

"Wrong Side of the Moon" by F. and S. Ashton has arrived, we understand. Francis Ashton wrote two time-travel-Mu-Atlantis novels, said to be very good: "The Breaking of the Seals" and "Alas, That Great City". "Princess of the Atom" by Cummings, "What Mad Universe" by Brown and "The Star Kings" by Hamilton still appear to be around. For followers of Edgar Rice Burroughs, there are paper-covered editions of quite a number of his books -- mostly Tarzan, but some Mars and Venus novels. And a hard cover edition of "Princess of Mars" at any rate.

Morgan's bookshop, and its branch, the Katinka, where Sydney fans have been meeting lately, are developing rapidly into the best suppliers in Sydney. Give them your support -- any bookseller who will help promote stf both needs and deserves it.

MAGAZINES:

Astounding's new monthly schedule is now in force. Latest issue sighted at this time is March. I've seen the original version, and the cover was excellent -- hard to believe, looking at this botched reproduction. One good and two bad stories, as usual lately. "Day of the Moron" is nothing world-shaking, either, it's just fairly good. But it is certainly original, presenting a side of atomic power industry that seems not to have been considered in stf before -- organised labor and industrial dispute. Most American stf writers either do not seem aware of the existence of unions, or take the kind of attitude the American press does, uncomprehending hostility. Piper deserved a big hand for presenting the case with understanding.

Super Science Stories, No. 7 of the British-Australian edition, has been distributed fairly widely, at last. Even in Adelaide, as shown by three letters from fans there attracted by the plug for ASFS in the reprinted "Fandom's Corner". Three stories. Due to SS's very bad habit of using vague and fairly similar titles that convey nothing about the story, and reinforcing these with incomprehensible and misleading comments, I had to re-read "Outpost Zero" and "Terminal Quest" to make sure I hadn't read them before, though I saw the original edition. They're quite good, though: the first is more in the Planet Stories tradition, which is not to condemn it at all. The other is a well done piece, fairly moving in a mild way. About ten years ago, when stf was a little less critical of some of its assumptions, this would have been a terrific hit -- now it's still O.K. "When Earth is Old" by Gallun shows that some of the veterans are still doing all right, thanks. Gallun belongs mainly to the Wonder and Astounding of the early 'thirties, when he was one of the most popular of minor writers, turning out consistantly well written and thoughtful shorts. One of a group without whose contribution stf would have been greatly inferior then and very different now: Murray Leinster, Harl Vincent, R.F.Starzl, C.D.Simak, Arthur Leo Zagat, Don Wandrei, Charles Willard Diffin, Jack Williamson and Paul Ernst, the others.

At any rate, the man who wrote "Old Faithful" still has what it takes. The present story is a sort of companion piece, not exactly a sequel, to his "Seeds of the Dusk", in Astounding of 1938, in which the ab-human descendents of true Man, bright but brutal, contend with plant intelligences settling Earth via the Arrhenius route... "When Earth is Old"

stands alone, but memory of the other story adds depth to it. (Remember those beautiful Dold illustrations, old timers?)

Stopgap did not comment on New Worlds No. 11, but it is a little late now. It was a fairly satisfactory issue. It came up to expectations, and there was nothing really bad in it that hadn't been there before. However, the drift to imitation of American stuff continues, with an exercise on the android theme that has been worn to shreds in the U.S. in the past two years. And the van Vogt short is pretty undistinguished, used only because of the famous name. The writeup on London fandom was good -- especially for London. A general fan department running letters and publicity with editorial comment would be far more help to fandom generally.

POOR SHOW:

At the Convention Bill Russell was collecting money for souvenir prints of the Convention posters on postcards: well, it has come to notice that some fans at any rate never got them. We are sure it wasn't done deliberately, but the fact remains that Bill is now working the long orbit somewhere between here and Hamburg, and nobody else was left to handle it. So if those who were hooked will let me know I'll see what I can do. -- G.S.

AND YOU'RE ANOTHER:

Someone is sitting on my copy of "Without Sorcery" by Theodore Sturgeon. I would like it back. I wonder if it's the same fan who has my S.F. Advertiser, Jan. 1952. I want that

back too. On the other hand, I have a copy of Fantasy Adv., June 1951, that's not mine. Who owns it?

A.S.F.S -- NEW MEMBERS -

- 83: F.W.Fredrickson, 23 Richmond St, Denystone East,
Via Ryde, NSW
- 84: Gordon McMillan, 42 Murralong Ave, Five Dock, NSW
- 85: Boyd Raeburn, 18 Momona Rd, Auckland SE4,
New Zealand.
- 86: A.F.Workman, 7 Hollywood Crescent, Willoughby, NSW
- 87: (Miss) Norma Williams, 64 Macleay St,
Potts Point, NSW
- 88: (Miss) Norma K. Hemming, 30 Carlton Parade,
Punchbowl, NSW
- 89: H.B.Young, 25 Morehead Ave, Norman Park,
Brisbane, Qld.
- 90: M.L.Lazar, Fl.4, 300 Penshurst St,
Willoughby, NSW
- 91: Lyell Crane, C/- 8 Dalton Rd, Mosman, NSW
- 92: L. Gaillard, 42 Elizabeth St, Campsie, NSW
- 93: Douglas Albion, 126 Phillip St, Sydney

New addresses and corrections:

- 8: Kevin L.G.Smith, C/- Cavill's Private Hotel,
Ballina, NSW
- 11: Michael McGuinness, Box 44, The Union,
University of Sydney, NSW

- 13: W.D.Veney, 5-7 Manion Ave, Rose Bay, NSW
- 16: Jock McKenna, 13 Lytton Ave, North Sydney
- 18: P.Glick -- moved, address unknown. Bluey, where are you?
- 19: A.W.Haddon, 4 Douglas St, Waterloo, NSW
- 23: Michael Lynch, 22 Goodlet St, Ashfield, NSW
- 24: Donald H. Tuck, 17 Audley St, North Hobart, Tas.
- 26: George Dovaston, 41 Roslyn St, Ashbury, NSW
- 29: (Miss) Madaline Moriarty, 65½ Hunter St, Sydney
- 37: B.L.Beirman -- moved, address unknown. Basil, where are you?
- 62: (Mrs.) Diana Wilkes, C/- Mrs. T.Johns, 4 Judge St, Kalinga, Brisbane, Qld.
- 79: J.H.Leggett, 9 Calypso Ave, Mosman, NSW

Coming -- probably next Stopgap -- a complete membership list to date. Membership cards will be issued as soon as we get new ones printed.

THRILLS KAPUT:

"Thrills Incorporated", juvenile space-adventure maglet printed in Sydney, has ceased publication with the 23rd issue, just released.

Thrills began in March 1950, and was issued on a monthly basis though unnumbered until no. 10, after which it was fairly irregular. Size varied -- the first 12 were about standard pulp size, the rest pocket size. Material was written locally, mostly under house names, and at least eight stories were

plagiarised from overseas sources by one local hack. On the whole, little promise was shown, and there was no improvement to speak of in spite of the efforts of ASFS member Norma Hemming in later issues. And thus ends the first attempt at an Australian sf magazine to get beyond talk. The field of real science fiction remains untouched in this country.

TWO MINDS WITH BUT A SINGLE THOUGHT DEPPE.

Kevin Dillon and R. Douglas Nicholson write, in part: "Sydney fandom strikes us as being essentially un-constructive. It produces three news-sheets but no news. Local items are confined to "J.Erp has measles" and "Wilfred van Manderpootz has gone to Patagonia"...Vertical Horizons is the least gossipy and best balanced of the three; probably the collaboration of a fair sized group of differing backgrounds has given this effect. The others are too obviously one- and two-man shows. This preoccupation with the trivia of fandom itself...is a fine case of tail-chasing. It could be called a second derivative of S.F. A concentration on the means in which the end has been largely lost sight of... It is vaguely humorous to listen to pseudo-intellectual fans sniffing at our old friend "Thrills" and gabble-honking about mature literature while they can't manage to put out a single ink-mark themselves."

I was going to comment, "Physician, heal thyself;" when I saw the forerunner to "Forerunner". It is certainly a point that while Stopgap and "Nancy", as I can't resist nicknaming Ken and Vol's sheet, are all very well, some more meaty fanmags would be welcome.